



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Eastern Shore of Virginia and Fisherman Island National Wildlife Refuges

Comprehensive Conservation Plan

May 2004



Cover: Drawing of Cape May and Blackburnian Warblers and Monarch Butterflies
Margaret Barnaby



This goose, designed by J.N. “Ding” Darling, has become a symbol of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

The *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service* is the principal federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish and wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 93-million acre National Wildlife Refuge System comprised of more than 540 national wildlife refuges and thousands of waterfowl production areas. It also operates 65 national fish hatcheries and 78 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, administers the Endangered Species Act, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid program which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state wildlife agencies.

Comprehensive Conservation Plans provide long term guidance for management decisions and set forth goals, objectives, and strategies needed to accomplish refuge purposes and identify the Service’s best estimate of future needs. These plans detail program planning levels that are sometimes substantially above current budget allocations and, as such, are primarily for Service strategic planning and program prioritization purposes. The plans do not constitute a commitment for staffing increases, operational and maintenance increases, or funding for future land acquisition.



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Eastern Shore of Virginia and Fisherman Island National Wildlife Refuges

Refuge Vision Statement

Lying at the tip of the Delmarva Peninsula, the Eastern Shore of Virginia and Fisherman Island National Wildlife Refuges are part of a national system of lands managed to ensure the future of wildlife and its habitats. These refuges serve as one of the country's most valuable stopovers for migratory birds. Nestled between the Atlantic Ocean and Chesapeake Bay, the refuges include a variety of habitats such as maritime forest, shrub thickets, grasslands, beaches, and tidal wetlands. These habitats provide a vital link for millions of songbirds, raptors, shorebirds, and butterflies to rest and refuel before continuing the rigorous journey to their wintering grounds.

Future conservation efforts lie in the refuges' commitment to protecting and enhancing the migration corridor through preserving, acquiring, and revegetating hardwood, shrub, and grassland areas. Alliances with nearby landowners will increase available habitat and research will focus on augmenting our knowledge to make biologically sound management decisions. The thousands of people who annually visit this gateway to the Eastern Shore of Virginia will gain an appreciation of the refuges' unique ecological role. In partnership with the local community, the refuges will also promote the area as a regional tourist destination that contributes to the economic stability of and enhances the quality of life on the Eastern Shore of Virginia. Visitors will leave with an understanding that this place of incredible diversity and ecological importance is part of a larger network of protected lands within the National Wildlife Refuge System, set aside specifically for wildlife.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
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May 2004

Comprehensive Conservation Plan Approval

for Eastern Shore of Virginia and Fisherman Island Refuges

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5/19/04
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May 28, 2004
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**For National Wildlife Refuge System Information
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